

The Old Paths

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“Answering An Ad”

Jarrold Jacobs

Did anyone notice the ad printed in Friday’s edition of the *Messenger-Inquirer* (11/29, p. 2C)? This ad reveals a mindset common today. Read it for yourself, and then let us review the ad in light of what the Bible says.

Reconnect With God

Are you a 2 denomination family seeking a common church home?

Century Christian Church . . .

- practices open communion for all believers
- encourages women & men in leadership
- accepts all baptisms
- Welcomes You!

Take a moment and let those words sink in. Is it not amazing what some people are practicing today? Their short ad said a lot. What were they saying?

First, they were saying that they have no interest in practicing what God’s word says. They speak of people in “**2 denominations**” seeking a “**common church home.**” Yet, when Christ spoke of such matters, He said, “*I will build my church*” (Matt. 16:18). He did not establish a plurality of churches, or denominations teaching different and conflicting doctrines. He built one church, and it was to this one church that the saved were added in Acts 2:47. Furthermore, Jesus

prayed for unity among His people (Jn. 17:21-23). Rather than encouraging people to come out of error and embrace the truth, the Century Christian Church’s answer is to offer themselves as a “common church home” in order that people who are divided religiously can stay divided.

These people have no interest in practicing what the Bible says, for they ignore the words of Paul. He said, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (I Cor. 1:10). How can this be done when all that people are being offered is a “common church home”?

Instead of trying to unite people in truth, the ad says plainly that they practice “**open communion for all believers.**” Please understand that when they say this, they are not talking about simply serving the Lord’s Supper in a public manner. They are saying that they promote “unity-in-doctrinal-diversity.” Their statement in the ad concerning “open communion” simply means they consider each person who assembles and eats the Lord’s Supper a brother or a sister in Christ. This statement in the ad simply reinforces their claim that people can have a “common church home” with them.

Yet, Christ said not just anyone is considered His brother or sister, but, “*whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother*” (Matt. 12:50). Paul said

those who are adopted into God’s family are “*heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ*” (Rom. 8:17). None other fits into this category! Paul said there is “*one faith*” (Eph. 4:5). These people at Century Christian Church are not considerate of New Testament teaching when they say they practice “open communion for all believers.” Christ has not approved of such!

Another thing stated in the ad was that they encourage “**women & men in leadership.**” This is not just empty words, for upon visiting the Century Christian Church’s website (www.centurychristian.org), they specifically named two women currently serving as deacons in that church. In fact, one woman was “Chair of Deacons” in 2000. Such practices as this are encouraging something that God condemned. Paul spoke to Timothy by inspiration, and told him, “*I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence*” (I Tim. 2:12). Furthermore, in stating the qualifications for elders and deacons, we see that one of the first qualifications for these offices is that the elders and deacons be husbands! (I Tim. 3:2, 12) Now, how did those two women meet that qualification? Over and over their little ad shouts blatant disregard for the Bible.

Finally, the ad says that they accept “**all baptisms.**” In making such a statement, they again declare that they are doing something that Paul did not. Paul said there is “*one baptism*” not two, three, or more (Eph. 4:5). In fact, when he preached to the Ephesians, and learned that they had been baptized of John (Acts 19:3), he taught them the truth and “*they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*” (Acts 19:5). The New Testament does not teach that “all baptisms” are acceptable with God.

Conclusion

While it may seem like I am “picking

on” the Century Christian Church, I am not. They decided to buy the ad, and they went public with it, stating their convictions. When someone writes something in a public manner, they are subject to public scrutiny. (I am well aware that this rule applies to me as well!)

However, such ads as was printed by the Century Christian Church gives us the opportunity to learn just what they believe and teach. Unlike what many want us to believe, we’re not “all the same.” It is not a true statement which says that we’re all basically doing and teaching the same thing with “minor differences.” These are huge differences between us and the denominational world, and it is because they are not interested in following Biblical teaching, nor are they interested in submitting themselves to Biblical authority. I am certain there are some within the denominational ranks who would like to simply follow what the Bible says. To them, I say what Paul said, and encourage them to “*come out from among them and be ye separate*” (II Cor 6:17).

Part of our responsibility as Christians is to find those who are tired of the denominational dogma and show them the truth. Do you know anyone who belongs to the Century Christian Church? Perhaps an article such as this would get them to thinking and seriously consider what they are practicing. Let us love them enough to be interested in their souls, and show them the simple truth in Christ. What a wonderful world this would be if we would just throw away all denominational titles, practices, etc., and truly be united under the banner of Christ, serving Him all the days of our lives. Then and only then will Christ’s prayer (Jn. 17:21-23) be answered. It is not answered by ignoring differences, but by resolving our differences through Christ and His

word, so we can all “*speak the same thing, and ... be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (I Cor. 1:10). Let us love our friends and neighbors enough to tell them the truth and bring them to the Lord.

ACU Encourages Churches To Sponsor Scholarship Funds

Jarrold Jacobs

A letter from Abilene Christian University (ACU) came on Monday (12/2). In it was a proposal by ACU that local churches engage in a “match scholarship” fund with ACU. Assuming that there are many young people who would like to receive a degree from a “Christian university”, but “believe their family cannot afford the tuition,” ACU proposes this “match fund.” In other words, they proposed that if a church will help pay for part of a student’s tuition, then ACU would match that amount (up to \$500 per student).

This letter is more evidence of how far away people have gone from the truth of the Bible. Where can we find a command, example, or necessary inference concerning a local church in the Bible supporting and funding a college? It is not there. Back in 1938, G.C. Brewer argued that any church that didn’t have ACC (now ACU) in its budget had the wrong preacher. He made the bold statement that if all the churches in

Texas would support and fund ACC, then contribution drives, solicitations, etc., would not be necessary. (Willis, Cecil, W.W. Otey: Contender For The Faith, p. 287) Yet, today, this same institution which receives contributions from people and churches all over the world continues to solicit money, and now proposes “matching funds” from churches. If I belonged to a church which had ACU in the budget, and was supplying them with funds on a regular basis, I would wonder why we would get a letter asking for even more money. Where is all this money going?

I am not opposed to learning, nor “higher education,” but let us let the church be the church and let us let the school be the school. Christ recognized the distinction between one individual, a group of individuals, and the church (Matt. 18:15-17). Paul saw this distinction (I Tim. 5:16), as did James (Jas. 1:22-27). Why can we not see and respect the distinctions God has made between the work of the individual saint and the work of the church?

This “blurring of lines” between the work of the church and the work of individual Christians has resulted in splitting the church. Such letters as ACU sent out just serves to widen the gap between us. How sad when we see a mindset already solidified which does not recognize the distinctions God has placed in His word for the church to make her special; but rather treats the Lord’s body like a denomination.

(Note: If you’d like to read it for yourself, a copy of the letter from ACU is yours for the asking. Let me know.)

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Preacher/Editor: Jarrold Jacobs

Phone: (270) 683-5386

Website address: www.southside-churchofchrist.com (Updated weekly!)

“**T**hus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” (Jer. 6:16)